

Gender and Poverty as Determinants of Secondary Schools' Teachers' Attitude Towards Teaching in Imo State

Roseline Nkechinyere

Okafor

*School of General Education,
Benjamin Uwajumogu (State)
College of Education,
Ihitte/Uboma, Imo State*

Article DOI:

10.48028/iiprds/esjprcd.v13.i1.10

Keywords:

Gender, Poverty,
Secondary schools'
teachers, Teachers'
attitude and teaching

Abstract

The attitude of teachers' towards teaching especially in secondary schools is very important for enhancing students' learning experience and satisfaction. This study investigated gender and poverty as determinants of secondary schools' teachers' attitude towards teaching in Imo State, Nigeria. The aims are to determine and also ascertain the nexus between gender, poverty and teachers' attitude towards teaching. Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the researcher in the course of the study. A total of 300 (three hundred) secondary schools' teachers in Imo state were randomly selected as samples for this study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled: Gender, poverty and teachers' attitude towards teaching questionnaire (GPTATTQ). The hypotheses were carefully analyzed using the multiple regression tested at 0.05 level of significance. Findings showed that the attitude of teachers towards teaching correlates positively and low towards poverty. Furthermore, gender was found not to be a determinant of both teachers' attitude towards teaching and poverty. The results showed that to a large extent, if secondary schools' teachers are paid salaries and entitlements timely, their attitude towards teaching will improve significantly. This is because they will be able to handle their numerous financial challenges as and when due. Recommendations for further studies were also made.

Corresponding Author:

Roseline Nkechinyere Okafor

Background to the Study

In Nigeria, secondary schools' teachers strive to develop themselves through further education, engagement in staff development programmes, and so on. This is because of their passion for the teaching profession, and their quest to teach and impart knowledge satisfactorily. The attitude of secondary teachers towards teaching is affected by gender dynamics and economic challenges (poverty) (Mezieobi, 2023). Furthermore, socio-economic factors and gender roles cause variations in commitment, job satisfaction, and pedagogical approaches. The research highlights how poor infrastructure and low rewards affect teacher motivation. This satisfaction teachers in secondary schools get apart from their quest to teach and teach well, is determined by how well and timely they are paid. This will also affect their attitude towards teaching and their level of preparation before walking into class to teach. Thus Kara (2020) pinpointed that attitude causes individuals to always behave in the same way to people, objects, events and foundations are constant and unchangeable beliefs, feelings and tendencies. According to Anderson (2021), attitude means a moderately intense emotion that prepares or predisposes individuals to respond consistently in a favourable or unfavourable manner when confronted with a particular object. For Okafor (2021), attitude is concerned with one's feelings towards an object, person or thing. Allport (2025) averred that attitude is a mental or neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. Kerlinger (2022) on his own part perceives attitude as an organized predisposition to think, feel, perceive and behave towards a referent or cognitive object. According to Dieghton (2021) attitude is considered to be as a predisposition to classify objects and events, and to reach to them with some degree of evaluative consistency. Furthermore, Bolan (2024:78) asserted that attitudes "... help to determine what an individual does in a given situation.

Teachers' attitudes toward teaching are influenced by several factors. Some of these factors may be social, economic, physical, psychological, technological and so on. All these factors can also be classified as external or internal depending on their nature of influence whether the teacher is male or female (gender) or from a reach/way affect his or her attitude towards teaching. Gender can therefore be defined as a social construction that differentiates the male identity from the female identity. Thus Nzeni (2017) averred that gender is the social construction of female and male identity which is more than biological differences between men and women. It includes the way in which those differences have been valued, used and relied upon to classify women and men and to assign roles and expectations to them. According to Aydon (2025), gender is the social phenomenon of distinguishing males and females based on a set of identity traits, it as a social, not physiological or biological construction. In other words, a female biologically can be a male through social construction. The society ascribes gender to human beings and animals depending on their dispositions. Furthermore, Okeke (2022) refers to gender as many socially and culturally constructed characteristics, qualities, behaviours and roles which different societies ascribes to females and males.

It is important to note that this study is also anchored on poverty. Poverty in Nigeria has become a national issue even though not just particular or specific to Nigeria. The Millennium Development Goals (2000) declared that “we will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected”. According to Mowafi (2023), absolute poverty refers to the set of resources a person must acquire in order to maintain a minimum standard of living. Furthermore, Mezieobi (2021) pinpointed that relative poverty is concerned with how well off an individual is with respect to others in the same society. Poverty alleviation is a necessary step to prevent the ills of poverty becoming extreme in the lives of individuals in a given society. The UNPP (2020) noted that “while income/consumption measures continue to serve as an important tool for the evaluation of global poverty, it has been widely recognized that income-generation programmes are not sufficient for poverty alleviation. Nigerian teachers including irrespective of their institutional affiliation are perceived to be poor-societal stereotype because of the treatment meted on them by the Nigerian government and so on.

Also, Sharma (2024) carried out a study on classroom environment; Ludwig, Burton, Weingarten, Milan and Myers (2025) studied the health of students, others have studied class size, anxiety, self-concept, parents' educational achievements, family size and so on all as determinants of attitudes both to learn among students of secondary schools and to teach among teachers of secondary schools. But this study will concentrate on gender and poverty as determinants of teachers' attitude towards teaching in secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following tentative statements (hypotheses) guided the study:

- (1) There is no significant composite effect of gender and poverty on teachers' attitude towards teaching.
- (2) There is no significant effect of gender and poverty on teachers' attitude towards learning.

Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive survey was used for the study. This is because the researcher wanted to depict the participants (teachers in secondary schools) in an accurate way. The researcher also did not have any opportunity of influencing the behaviours of the participants in any way.

Setting of the Study

Secondary schools in Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State were the setting of the study. There several private and public secondary schools in Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State. Secondary schools are made up of upper basic education level schools (JSS 1-3), and senior secondary schools. Owerri municipal council is a local government area serving as the heart of the state capital city, Owerri. It covers 58km² with a 2006 census population of 127,213

composed of five indigenous villages known as Owerri Nchi Ise (Umuororonjo, Amawom, Umuonyeche, Umuodu, and Umuonyima). It is a major trade centre, overseen by a local government chairman and several traditional rulers (Okpara, 2023).

Participants

The participants for this study comprised three hundred (300) secondary schools' teachers in Owerri Municipal Council, Imo State, Nigeria. The three hundred samples (150 males and 150 females) were selected through a simple random sampling technique from the different private and public secondary schools in Imo state.

Instrument

A questionnaire titled: Gender, poverty and teachers' attitude towards teaching questionnaire (GPTATTQ) was used in collecting data from the respondents. The questionnaire was made up of three (3) sections A, B and C. Section A who made up of the bio-data of the numerous respondents while sections B and C were made up of 15 questions each. Section B had questions on gender while section C had questions on poverty. The 4-likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagrees and Strongly Disagree with Acronyms SA, A, D, and SD respective were used. Two experts validated the instrument, one from Educational Management in the Department of Social Science Education, Imo State University, Owerri and one from Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Educational Foundations, Imo State University, Owerri. Furthermore, test retest was used to test for internal consistency of the questionnaire.

Procedure

The researcher with the help of two research assistant visited Imo State University, Owerri. The 2 (two) researcher Assistants that were part of the research are postgraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri, and secondary schools' teachers. Their involvement in the research made the administration of questionnaire to secondary schools' teachers easier. Three hundred questionnaires were administered and retrieved same day.

Data Analysis

The data generated from the questionnaires administered were analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression. The SPSS 15.0 statistical package was utilised in the computation.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Gender on Secondary Schools' Teachers' Attitudes towards Teaching

S/N	Gender	\bar{x}	Std	Rem	Secondary Schools' Teachers' Attitudes towards Teaching	\bar{x}	Std	Rem
1	Current textbooks available on gender and poverty in secondary schools have improved my understanding of the term	3.09	0.41	A	Developing of reading culture of materials on gender and poverty	3.50	0.25	A
2	Teaching classes where the students learn about the importance of promoting gender equality, makes me understand that secondary schools are essential	1.67	0.27	D	Ability to teach about promoting gender equality	2.11	0.32	D
3	Watching movies on the impacts of gender equality affects my understanding of the term in the classroom	2.21	0.31	D	Enhancing teaching and study durations on gender equality	2.50	0.39	A
4	I enjoy reading books in my school's library on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in teaching and learning	1.63		D	Cultivation of research skills on gender equality and gender mainstreaming	3.12	0.42	A
5	My school has a lot of resources on gender and poverty	1.80	0.32	D	Appreciation of books on gender and poverty	2.56	0.39	A
6	Orientation on the essence of gender equality and eradication of poverty should be organized for teachers and students regularly	1.62	0.23	D	Disposition to attending orientation programmes on gender equality and eradication of poverty	1.50	0.21	D
7	Computer literacy skills have positively affected my teaching capacity in the secondary schools	1.57	0.25	D	Ability to adapt to any environment where teaching and learning can take place	2.01	0.36	D
8	Consulted books on gender and poverty are always relevant to secondary schools' teachers	1.61	0.41	D	Exploring reading group opportunities on gender and poverty	2.00	0.29	D
9	I am being encouraged to research in my school on the impacts of gender equality and poverty eradication	3.06	0.42	A	Receptive to other people's ideas and contributions to gender equality and poverty eradication	1.61	0.26	D
10	Maintenance of a positive attitude toward gender equality and poverty eradication	1.54	0.25	D	Enjoying the positive attitude toward gender equality and poverty eradication	1.84	0.21	D
11	Poor information services on gender equality and poverty eradication in my school discourage me from accessing materials on gender equality and poverty eradication	3.09	0.23	A	Unwillingness to make use of materials on gender equality and poverty eradication for pieces of research	1.54	0.24	D
12	I learned a lot in school during my training years about gender and poverty, and without accessing materials	1.42	0.21	SD	Unwilling to participate in a literacy programme on gender and poverty	1.52	0.21	D
13	Educational activities on gender stereotyping are prohibited in my school	1.56	0.40	D	Lack of interest in computer skills programme on gender	1.62	0.23	D
14	Increase in information materials available on gender and poverty	1.52	0.32	D	Unwilling to read books on gender and poverty	1.50	0.26	D
15	High levels of crime happen in the secondary schools due to the effects of gender stereotype and poverty	1.82	0.32	D	Inability to refer/consultation on issues of gender stereotype and poverty	1.50	0.21	D
	Overall mean	29.21	5.00			29.71	4.44	

The result presented in Table 1 shows that all the items are positive. This is evident in the level of the respondents' agreement with the items' statement shown in the details of the table above. Meanwhile, the result shows that secondary schools' teachers' attitude towards the teaching is greatly influenced by gender.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and correlation between the gender and poverty on secondary schools' teachers' attitude toward teaching

Variables	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients		T	Sig.
(constant)	23	2.316			19.518	.000
Gender	0.516	0.138	0.592		7.518	.000
Poverty	-0.54	0.702	-0.122		-1.542	0.884

Dependent variable: Secondary schools' teachers' attitude towards teaching

The regression analysis results in table two show that only secondary schools' teachers' gender with the regression coefficient (0) of 0.516 and a beta weight of 0.592 significantly contributed to secondary schools' teachers' attitude towards the teaching while the contribution of poverty was not significant. The prediction equation is, therefore, as follows: secondary schools' teachers' attitude towards teaching = 23 + 0.516 (G) – 0.54P. Based on the result, the null hypothesis which proposed a no significant contribution of the individual variable to the prediction of secondary schools' teachers' attitudes towards teaching was accepted for gender and rejected for poverty.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and correlation matrix for the relationship between the predictor variables and criterion variable

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Secondary schools' teachers' attitude towards teaching	Gender	Poverty
Secondary schools' teachers' attitude towards teaching	300	29.7466	4.44684	2.000	0.598	-0.152
Gender	300	29.2134	5.10242	0.598	2.000	-0.102
Poverty	300	2.9	0.998	-0.152	-0.102	2.000

The result from table three indicates the mean and standard deviation of the respondents. The participants' value for Secondary schools' teachers' attitude towards teaching was M=29.7466, SD = 4.4684, gender was M = 29.2134, SD = 0.998. Meanwhile, the matrix correlation between the two variables (gender and poverty) and the criterion variable

(Secondary schools' teachers' attitudes towards teaching) indicated that Secondary schools' teachers' attitudes towards teaching correlate positively and low towards gender. Also, poverty was never a determinant of both Secondary schools' teachers' attitudes towards teaching and their gender.

Table 4: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis between the predictor variable and the criterion variable

Multiple R (adjusted) = 0.61[^], multiple R² (ADJUSTED) = 0.186					
Adjusted R² = 0.162, Std. The Error of the estimate = 4.26386					
Mode	Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	136.922	4	64.462	15.062	0.736 ^b
Resident	1336.264	294	9.09		
Total	1473.186	298			

Dependent variable: Secondary schools' teachers' attitudes towards teaching
 Predictors: (constant), poverty, gender.

From Table four, it was indicated that the independent variables gave a co-efficient of multiple regression [®] of 0.61, multiple R² (0.186), and adjusted R³ = (0.162), which indicates that 93% of the two variables accounted for the Secondary schools' teachers' attitudes towards teaching. This, therefore, indicates that the analysis of the independent variables as a block did not contribute to the Secondary schools' teachers' attitudes towards teaching. The table from the analysis of variables also indicates, it produced an F-ratio of 15.062 and was found to be insignificant at 0.05 levels.

Discussion of Findings

The brief discussions on the findings of hypothesis 1 and 2 have been done immediately after the table 1 and 2 respectively. To reiterate, hypothesis one shows that poverty was not a determinant of both teacher's attitude towards teaching and gender. For hypothesis 2, the results of the regression analysis showed that only gender with the regression coefficient (b) of 0.516 and a beta weight of 0.592 significantly is responsible for secondary schools' teachers' attitude towards teaching while poverty was not significant in predicting secondary schools' teachers' attitude towards teaching. In support of this study, Roman, Cuestas and Fenollar (2018) in their study revealed that self-esteem has the strongest impact on learning and that improving self-esteem is important.

Conclusion

The relationship between gender, poverty and secondary schools' teachers' attitude towards teaching have been exposed through this study. Irrespective of the situation, with the Nigerian context, poverty, gender and secondary schools' teachers' attitude toward teaching will always impact on the other negatively or positively. With constant and improved salary package for

secondary schools' teachers, their attitude towards teaching will be tremendously improved and students will learn effectively.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are important;

1. First, the teaching environment should be made conducive.
2. Second, gender should not be made a determinant for any positive or impression in the school environment or education sector.
3. Third, teachers' emoluments/remuneration should be relooked in all its ramification.
4. Four, teachers (lecturers) – students (undergraduates) postgraduates) relationship level should be improved.

References

- Allport, G. W. (2025) Attitude. In Murchison, C. (Ed.) *Handbook of social psychology*, Massachusetts: Clark Unity press.
- Anderson, I. W. (2021). *Assessing effective characteristics in schools*, Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Aydon, E. (2025). *It's a man's world: The effect of traditional masculinity or gender equality*, Retrieved from www.e-ir.info/2015/03/29/its-a-man's-world-the-effect-of-traditional. 15/12/2017.
- Bolan, B. W. (2024). The effect of a short course of death education attitudes: An experimental study. *Dissertation Abstract International* 42, 1498-9.
- Deighton, L C. (2021). *The encyclopedia of education*, 4, New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Kara, M. C. (2020). *EFL Students' attitudes toward learning English language: The case study of Kashan University students*. www.tandfonline.com/doi/retrieved on 15/12/17 by 12:15 noon.
- Kerlington, F. N. (2022). *Foundation of behavioural research*. New York: Hold Rinehart and Winston.
- Mezieobi, K. A. (2021). Poverty, wealth, and affluence: Social implications on human existence in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Innovation and Review*, 12(10), 120-131
- Mezieobi, K. C. (2023). Gender dynamic and economic challenges: Influence on teachers' attitude towards teaching in Nigerian schools, *International Journal of Teacher Education*, 7(11), 90-101

- Nzewi, U. M. (2017). Conceptual issues in gender studies. In Nzewi, U.M., Kanno, T.N. Obasi, V.A and Obih, S.O.A. (Eds.) *New perceptive in gender studies in Nigeria*. Owerri: Mercy Divine publishers/
- Okafor, J. O. (2021). *A functional approach to gender education*, Awka: Mcks Unique Publishers Ltd.
- Okeke, E. A. C. (2022). Gender equity/equality in Education: A lead paper presented at the 3rd annual conference of the world council for curriculum and instruction (WCCI), Nigeria chapter, Abuja. *Nigerian Educational Digest*, 10(1): 113.
- Okpara, E. N. (2023). History of Owerri people: Their unique features. *International Journal of History and Strategic Studies*, 12(8): 123-134
- Roman, S., Cuestas, P. J. & Fenollar, P. (2018). An examination of the interrelationship between self-esteem, others' expectations, family support, learning approaches and academic achievement. *Studies in Higher Education*, 33(2): 127-138 retrieved from Eric (E3788602) on 20/2/2017 by 2.04am.
- United Nations Development Programme (2000). *Overcoming human poverty: UNDP Poverty Report*. 2000. Found at www.undp.org/povertyreport/